

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 511

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

SUMMARY: THE UPPER HOUSE AUGUST 8 PASSED THE CONSTITU-

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TIONAL AMENDMENT BILL VOIDING MRS GANDHI'S CONVICTION

FOR ILLEGAL CAMPAIGN PRACTICES, IN GUJARAT, THE JANATA FRONT COALITION WAS ABLE TO WIN TWO OUT OF THE THREE RAJYA SABHA SEATS CONTESTED IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY AUGUST 8. CONGRESS (R) WAS UNABLE TO SPLIT THE FRONT, WHICH EMERGES FROM THE CONTEST STRENGTHENED. ASIDE FROM A REDUCTION IN PRICES, THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS NOT CHANGED LIFE VERY MUCH FOR THE WORKING PEOPLE OF BIHAR. THE TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER REPLIED TO A GOI CHARGE THAT PRICES HAD FALLEN ALL OVER INDIA EXCEPT IN TAMIL NADU. A MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PRODUCTION PUBLICLY STATED THAT THE GOI WAS AWARE THAT INDIA'S ADVERSARIES WERE BUILDING UP THEIR OFFENSIVE POTENTIAL WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF UNNAMED "POWERS." END SUMMARY.

1. PARLIAMENT: BY A VOTE OF 161 TO 9, THE RAJYA SABHA APPROVED THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL VOIDING THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONVICTION OF ILLEGAL ELECTORAL PRACTICES WHICH WAS PASSED YESTERDAY BY THE LOK SABHA. OFFICES IN THE LAW MINISTRY AND AD HOC GROUPS ARE REPORTEDLY HARD AT WORK DRAFTING THE SET OF NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO BE PLACED BEFORE THE UPCOMING SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, NOW SCHEDULED TO CONVENE SOMETIME BETWEEN AUGUST 21 AND 28, VOACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURVES.

2. GUJARAT: THE PEOPLES FRONT COALITION SUCCESSFULLY CLOSED RANKS AND, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE KIZAM MAZDOOR LOK PAKSHA (KMLP) AND INDEPENDENT MLAS, WON TWO OUT OF THREE RAJYA SABHA SEATS CONTESTED IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY AUGUST 8. (STATE ASSEMBLIES FORM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGES FOR RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS.) INTENSIVE PRE-ELECTION CONGRESS(R) MANEUVERINGS FAILED TO DRAW SUPPORT AWAY FROM THE FRONT AND LEFT CONGRESS (R) WITH ONLY ONE SEAT. THE JANATA FRONT VICTORY SHOULD RAISE MORALE AND SELFCONFIDENCE WITHIN GUJARAT'S GOVERNING COALITION. IT IS ALSO A SIGNAL TO CONGRESS (R) IN DELHI AS WELL AS IN GUJARAT THAT THE FRONT'S FIVE PARTY COALITION MAY BE STRONGER THAN PREVIOUSLY IMAGINED.

3. A BOMBAY CONGEN USIS OFFICIAL ON A RECENT VISIT TO
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GUJARAT MET WITH THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF GUJARAT UNIVERSITY IN AHMEDABAD TO DISCUSS USIS PROGRAMMING FOR THIS YEAR, THE VICE CHANCELLOR SUGGESTED THAT THE VENUE FOR USIS PROGRAMS BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE UNIVERSITY IN VIEW OF THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED STUDENT TURMOIL OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

4. BIHAR: A CONGRESS (R) MP FROM BIHAR, WHO IS ALSO

A SENIOR LEADER OF THE INTUC COAL MINERS FEDERATION, TOLD US THAT FOR THE WORKING MAN IN BIHAR THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS NOT CHANGED THINGS VERY MUCH. EXPLOITATION OF THE COAL MINERS BY MONEY LENDERS--UNION LEADERS, POLITICIANS, AND MANAGEMENT STAFF--IS STILL AS WIDELY PRACTICED AS EVER. INDEED, THE EVIL, WHICH WAS BEING CHALLENGED BY A YOUNG, ENERGETIC DISTRICT COMMISSIONER WHO HAD MOUNTED A ONE-MAN CAMPAIGN, NOW ENJOYS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE. ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO, THE USURERS SUCCEEDED IN THEIR CAMPAIGN TO HAVE THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER TRANSFERRED. THE MP ADDED THAT WHOLESALE STEALING OF COAL WITH THE CONNIVANCE OF MANAGEMENT STAFF CONTINUES (A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES INCLUDING FALSE INVOICING ARE USED). NO REAL PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE AREAS OF LAND REFORM OR AGRICULTURAL MINIMUM WAGES. THE PROSPECT FOR CHANGE IN THOSE AREAS WAS NOT GOOD, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE CALLED FOR IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM. WHILE THE MP SAID THAT PRICES HAD COME DOWN, HE WONDERED HOW PERMANENT THE REDUCTIONS WOULD BE. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE STATE WAS QUIET.

5. TAMIL NADU: AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN MADRAS ON AUGUST 7, CHIEF MINISTER KARUNANIDHI DENIED GOI FINANCE MINISTER SUBRAMANIAM'S RECENT CHARGE THAT PRICES HAD FALLEN ALL OVER INDIA EXCEPT FOR TAMIL NADU. SUBRAMANIAM HAD ALSO SAID THAT THE EMERGENCY "DOES NOT EXIST" IN TAMIL NADU. THE CHIEF MINISTER REJOINED THAT HE WAS "SURPRISED AND PAINED" THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD ALLOW A GOI MINISTER TO MAKE "SUCH BASELESS ALLEGATIONS" AGAINST THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT.

6. SABRE RATTLING: AS REPORTED BY THE CPI DAILY,
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PATRIOT, AUGUST 8, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PRODUCTION, RAM NIWAS MIRDHA, ON AUGUST 7 IN BANGALORE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE "PREPARATIONS THAT 'OUR ADVERSARIES' WERE MAKING TO BUILD UP THEIR OFFENSIVE POTENTIAL WITH ASSISTANCE, SOMETIMES OPEN, SOMETIMES NOT SO OPEN FROM 'POWERS WHO OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER' AND WARNED THAT 'IF THEY ARE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO MAKE ANY UNWISE MOVE, THEY WILL HAVE TO PAY VERY DEARLY FOR IT.'"

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